



newsounds

On Judging Bands

By SCOTT HOLTZMAN

I found out one thing for sure while judging the Battle of the Bands at the Teenage Fair. I found out why most local groups stay local. It's factor Number 5 on the judging sheet. It's called "originality."

All of the judges were wanting desperately to see something different, but we were sadly disappointed.

I don't just mean original material (although that would have helped). I mean a different way of presentation. Most of the bands I saw there became a blur in my mind because they were all so much alike.

The other four categories were: General Appearance, Group Personality, Musicianship and Showmanship. I had great difficulty figuring out the difference in Group Personality and Showmanship, but it didn't become a big problem because there wasn't a whole lot of either on display that night. Most bands who danced while they played all looked alike. The cool, standstill bands came off better because it's hard to go wrong if you don't move around.

The two easiest categories to judge were General Appearance and Musicianship. Those two are either there or they aren't. It is possible to judge these after one song. This is why you bands should make your first number your strongest. The judges have practically decided after one number.

The 12 bands were so heavily weighted with Soul Groups that it was unfair to all of them. They were just too similar. Besides, it is unfair to judge a Soul Group along with a Show Group or an Underground Group.

What I'm getting at is that we need a reappraisal of group types. One type of group should not have to compete with a completely dissimilar group musically. If a group's bag is to play horns and do kicks, then there is absolutely no way of comparing them to a strictly vocal-harmony group or an Underground Group.

I feel that there should be categories in contests just as I feel it is unfair to compare a musical comedy to a heavy drama in the Academy Awards.

My contention is that there is no Number 1 group in Houston. There are several Number 1 groups of different types that draw on different kinds of audiences.

I'm going to make a partial list of local groups (I'll be killed for leaving groups out, but this is only a partial list and there is no slam intended toward anybody). I feel that these categories make sense to the musically hip crowd and I wish you'd write me your thoughts on the subject. I'd like for DJs, newspapermen and anyone who has band contests to give it some thought. It is much more fair to everyone concerned.

All groups listed in alphabetical order:

Show Groups (Groups that use dancing and performing as an integral part of their acts and who do not lean heavily towards soul or psychedelic music): The Clique, The Countdown Five, Jake & The Jokers, Neal Ford & The Fanatics, and The Sound Investment.

Vocal Groups (Groups that lean heavily on a vocal sound with music and harmony being their main selling points): The Blox, The Coastliners, The Magic Ring, The Sixpentz and Thursday's Children.

Soul Groups (Groups that play mostly soul, have horns and move in unison while the lead singer dances alone): Charley Romans & The Pastels, Destination Soul, Soul Brothers, The Traits and The Triumphs.

Underground Groups (Groups that play a lot of experimental music, play mostly unknown songs, don't dance, don't dress alike and use reverse showmanship by ignoring the audience): fever tree, Lost & Found, Matchbox, Georgetown Medical Band and Thirteenth Floor Elevators.

Of course, there are groups like The Moving Sidewalks, and The A-440 that cross categories and can't really be lumped into one bag, but that could be taken into account by the judges if it were made clear to them.

In other words, could you really judge Paul Revere & The Raiders, The Association, Smokey Robinson & The Miracles and Jefferson Airplane in a contest, and have a winner?

I don't think so. They just can't be compared with one another and I hope you'll all give this some thought and realize that contests must have categories to be fair to everyone. The same goes for the Number 1 group in Houston. There isn't one, there are several. Think about it.



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calendar

THURSDAY

Sam the Sham and The Pharoahs and The Shamettes — Grand Park, Bay City

FRIDAY

Farfetched — Kirwin High School, Galveston

Dante's Inferno — VIP Teen Center, 13009 Aldine-Westfield

fever tree — Safari, Baytown
Troy Morris and The Dynamics — The Dungeon, Spring

SATURDAY

The Sound Investment — Cleveland Teen Club

The Nomads — La Marque Pavilion

A-440 — The Dungeon, Spring
fever tree — Pink Panther Teen Club, Missouri City
Dante's Inferno — Carousel

The newsounds calendar prints the facts about the public appearances of the top teen music groups in the Houston area. Send the information to newsounds calendar, The Houston Post, Houston, Texas 77001.

The New Yorkers, left, are described by the music world as a "Teddy bear group." They will be promoting their records in Houston Tuesday.

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